

SERVING THE AFRICAN DIASPORA SINCE 1972

THE ONLYX

INFORMER

NOV. 07

WEIGHING JUSTICE

- RACISM OR JUSTICE?
- LOSING THE RIGHT TO VOTE
- PLAYING THE RACE CARD



THE ONYX INFORMER

NOV. 07

exists to be a voice for the people of the African Diaspora and the greater Boston community in which we reside. The ONYX embraces the unity and values of diversity in both the content of our publication and in the membership of our organization.

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COVER STORY (11) Racism or Justice?

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Wisdom for the Ages



Is it just me, or does there seem to be a flush of stories about discrimination and racism lately? It's quite a surprise actually; I'm so used to learning how Britney Spears got more insane this month or which celebrity looks to be, but is probably not, pregnant.

As an African-American, I'm privy to the fact that discrimination and racism are very real. I don't need a news story to validate it because I've had experiences where I've felt discriminated against. That said, I'm aware these stories don't usually make the front page of newspapers or the 6 p.m. news on television...though they often should. My experiences, though they were minor, always left a lasting impression. I've definitely felt the way Zora Neale Hurston has. It's astonishing to think that there is so much hate in the world, that people take it upon themselves to act in objection to someone who is different from them, whether it's because of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

I wonder if I asked a racist person the reason for their hatred if they'd be able to convincingly argue their side. Probably not. But, just

Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It's beyond me."

~Zora Neale Hurston

as much as I think it's insane to discriminate, I realize that not having a valid reason isn't going to stop someone from doing it.

For this issue, among our usual features, the *Onyx* will highlight some events and topics where questions of racism and discrimination have been raised. I hope all of our readers will read these pieces with the care and concern the staff took to write them. While we all may have differing opinions or perspectives on these issues, perhaps the *Onyx* can become a vehicle through which we discuss them. Just like we need more coverage on such matters, we also need to engage in some serious dialogue.

And if you've ever been the subject of hate, don't let it get to you. In the end, while it's still extremely important to promote racial awareness, feel eased by the fact that narrow-minded individuals are missing out on all you—or anyone else they choose to hate—have to offer.

Candice Springer
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The Onyx is Yours

This week, with the click of my mouse I came across the most powerful quote ever: an excerpt from Malcolm X's "A Declaration of Independence," delivered on March 12, 1964, a year before he was assassinated. It appeared as a footer of an email that was sent by the treasurer of Brothers About Change (BAC), sophomore Jordan Clark, to all the presidents of the various Black and Latino/a student groups. But the quote stood out even though the font size was small.

"There can be no black—white unity until there is first some black unity. There can be no workers' solidarity until there is first some racial solidarity. We cannot think of uniting with others, until after we have first united among ourselves. We cannot think of being acceptable to others until we have first proven acceptable to ourselves. One can't unite bananas with scattered leaves."

Though Malcolm wrote this more than four decades ago, the message is timeless. Black people must unite. As a body that makes less than 5 percent of the undergraduate student population

and a set of faculty and staff that is even smaller, we must come together as one. As the saying goes, we may be small in numbers but together we are a mass and can tackle every obstacle.

I write this not because I sense a lack of unity. It's because I have witnessed history being made right now as Black and Latino/a student leaders are talking, collaborating together and supporting each other.

Thus, I want to applaud the effort they are making between classes, work-study, part-time jobs and after co-op. Beginning with the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute's Open House in September to events such as the Meet and Greet Black Faculty, Beatless, the Poverty Forum, BAC's annual conference, "Brothers from Another Mother," "The State of Men of Color" and HIV/AIDS Awareness Week, student leaders of BESS/NSBE, CSO, CVSA, HSU, LASO, MAPS, NASO, NBSA, and UGE, keep up the good work! Remember the *Onyx Informer* is here for you as well.

Margaret Kamara

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Attention Minority Student Groups:

Want your event in the Onyx calendar? Please send event listings to onyxinformer@yahoo.com. Type: "Event for Onyx Calendar" in the subject line. We are now accepting events for January-February!

Comments, suggestions?

If you have any comments, critiques, topic ideas or suggestions please let us know! We want to hear from you.

Please email us at onyxinformer@yahoo.com or editorinchiefonyx@yahoo.com.

Attention Poets, Artists, and Literary Writers:

Submit your pieces to our SoulSpeech section! Get published! Send your pieces to onyxeditor@yahoo.com. Type "SoulSpeech submission" in the subject line. We are now accepting pieces for our January-February Issue.

In Our Next Issue:

The Onyx Celebrates Black History Month

Coming Soon:

The Onyx Hits The Web!
January 2008

MUSIC

The Legacy of John Coltrane

BY JENNIFER BARRIS

From the listeners in the darkened auditorium to the performers on stage, everyone indulged in the wonderful music of John Coltrane during the John Coltrane Memorial Concert (JCMC) 30th Anniversary Celebration. For this special anniversary, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino and Cambridge Mayor Kenneth Reeves declared the week of Sept. 16-22 the John Coltrane Memorial Concert Week. Several events throughout the week were hosted by Boston area colleges and universities.

The JCMC is the world's oldest annual performance honoring both the musical and spiritual heritage of jazz saxophonist and composer, John Coltrane. The concert has grown and developed with the help of master percussionist Syd Smart, the late bassist Hayes Burnet, and saxophonist Leonard Brown, who is also a professor in Northeastern's Music Department. According to these men, the memorial is built on three principles:

- » Black American musicians should exert leadership in defining, perpetuating, expanding, and enhancing the musical traditions of Black American people.
- » John Coltrane was one of the most remarkable musicians in history and worthy of a memorial tribute.
- » The community of both listeners and musicians has continued deep and abiding interest in and love for Coltrane's music.

This year, Northeastern hosted the concert on Sept. 21 and 22 in Blackman Auditorium. Professor Brown gave a short introduction, which elegantly set

the mood for the performance while he educated the audience on the prestige of the performers at the event.

"[The concert] was very accessible to both the novice and experienced concert goers," said journalism professor and jazz aficionado, Bill Kirtz.

Coltrane Quartet and Amiri Baraka. In the end, it was obvious that Coltrane's music had strongly influenced both the performers and the audience.

"John was able to bring the spiritual root back," said Professor Brown. "Music has always played an



Ravi Coltrane/Ravi Coltrane Quartet

On Friday the 21st, the Bill Pierce Quartet lit up the stage. The evening doubled as a fundraiser for the John Coltrane Memorial Concert Outreach Program. The program was founded by Brown and Price in 1992 with the purpose of bringing live performances of exceptional music to elementary and secondary school students in select Boston and Cambridge schools. The concert on Saturday saw dynamic performances by The John Coltrane Memorial Ensemble, featuring the Ravi

important role in culture, entertainment and spirituality. John Coltrane has set a milestone in music by not only reforming modern jazz, but also being an inspiration to musicians and the African American people for generations to come."

PHOTO BY CRAIG BAILEY

The Battle in Hip-Hop: Mainstream vs. Conscious

BY MARQUES CROSBY

As we approach the end of another year of music sales, many still pose the question: "Is Hip-Hop dead?" When you turn on the radio are you satisfied with the music you are hearing? It seems that an invisible line in the hip-hop industry has been drawn between mainstream and conscious, political artists. Mainstream artists are said to be those who produce music to appeal to a mass audience while political artists are considered revolutionary or making music to initiate change or justice. So which is better? While many criticize mainstream artists for glorifying guns, violence, and negative stereotypes of Black women, conscious political artists are also criticized for being "too political." There are pros and cons for both sides and many have their own opinions. Some will choose a side while others simply abstain from the conversation and remain in the middle.

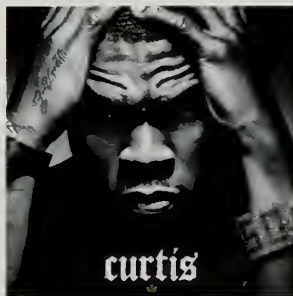
Many mainstream artists such as 50 Cent, T.I., and Nelly have been interviewed and questioned regarding the content of their music and the messages they are sending the youth. On a BET production titled "Hip-Hop vs. America," rapper T.I. was criticized for the content in some of his songs. He replied that others should be happy rappers are out there saying

and not doing. This in itself poses many important questions.

Why promote messages in your music that are negative at all? Why not make music that will benefit your

about the condition of black people in America are receiving more credit and are becoming increasingly popular. Recently, on Sept. 11, two hip-hop icons, Kanye West and 50 Cent released albums. This marked hip-hop history because not only were two accomplished artists releasing albums on the same day but each represented one side of the music spectrum. At the end of a week of sales, Kanye West outsold 50 Cent by almost 300,000 copies of his CD. This was a significant advancement in hip-hop because it showed people do care about the content and quality of the music they are listening to.

But your thoughts on the matter are really what counts. Music has always been the voice of our people and many believe that today's popular artists are our present day leaders. If this is the case, then which kind of music do you want our youths to hear?



50 CENT ALBUM COVER

VS.



KANYE WEST ALBUM COVER



T.I. ALBUM COVER

VS.



COMMON ALBUM COVER

people instead of set them back? But at the end of the day, if you as a consumer are looking for music to dance to instead of lyrical content, mainstream artists could be your preference.

While some mainstream artists such as Talib Kweli, Common, and Kanye West are considered political artists, others just like them are not receiving the publicity they deserve. But on a positive note, it seems that as time progresses these artists who make music

When You Lose the Right to

by Ivelisse Sanchez

AS PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY organizations around the country fight to engage those with criminal records into politics, the warm afternoon of Sept. 18 prompted dozens of people to protest in front of the Massachusetts State House. The protesters demanded reform of the Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Law, which allows public and private organizations to access a person's criminal record. Social workers, politicians and community members gathered to show support for the millions of people who have been convicted of crimes. Here in Massachusetts those on probation and parole can actively engage in politics by voting for elected officials. However, states across the country have different disenfranchisement laws that generate confusion as to who can vote and at what point during or after serving their sentence.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) approximately 5.3 million people have been disenfranchised due to felony convictions. Across the United States disenfranchisement laws vary greatly and four states exhibit very opposite sides of the debate. In Kentucky and West Virginia, anyone convicted of a felony is permanently prohibited from voting in local, state and federal elections. And only in Vermont and Maine can those who are currently incarcerated vote. The other 46 states fall somewhere in between, differentiating between those on probation and those on parole.

Although the United States Constitution upholds the right to vote for every citizen, the Supreme Court has ruled each state can determine who can be disenfranchised. This is as long as the state laws do not violate the Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which

forbids states from denying the right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" or the Nineteenth and Twenty Sixth Amendments which prohibits disenfranchising people based on sex and age, respectively.

The creation of the Fifteenth Amendment related directly to the political condition of emancipated slaves in the late 1800s. Though various tactics were used to keep freed slaves from voting, many occurred primarily in the South; some were required to pay poll taxes they could not afford, take reading tests though they were illiterate and many were intimidated by White supremacist groups into forgoing their right to vote.

Sasha Abramsky, Demos Senior Fellow and author of Conned and American Furies, has studied the history of disenfranchisement and the impact of incarceration.

"Keeping blacks out of the political system was a fundamental purpose of felon disenfranchisement in the early 19th and 20th centuries," Abramsky said. "But, today, you have 50 different states with 50 different laws and as long as the legislation isn't explicitly targeting one group, for example, African Americans, the Supreme Court will continue to allow states to decide who can be disenfranchised."

Willie Thomas, 51, a resident of New York and community activist, has been directly affected by felon disenfranchisement legislation.

"I will never have the right to vote again because I am serving a life sentence," Thomas says. "When you get out of prison they expect you to get a job and pay taxes but I can't vote for my city councilor, my mayor, or my judges. You cannot have people living in a county and want them to be law

abiding, upstanding citizens and then strip them of their right to elect people to represent them."

In 1977, Thomas was convicted of an A1 felony, the most serious in New York, and was sentenced 15 years to life in prison. After serving 29 years, he was released with lifetime parole. The state of New York only allows those on probation to vote. Thomas is currently on the Board of Directors of the Interfaith Coalition of Advocates for Reentry and Employment, an organization that works with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated persons to reintegrate into society.

Roger Clegg, President and General Council for the Center for Equal Opportunity, a non-profit public policy research organization in Virginia, said he doesn't believe those with felony convictions should be allowed to vote.

In the 2006 article, "Answering the Challenges to Felon Disenfranchisement," Clegg wrote, "You don't have a right to make the laws if you aren't willing to follow them yourself. To participate in self-government, you must be willing to accept the rule of law. We don't let everyone vote--not children, not non-citizens, not the mentally incompetent. There are certain minimum and objective standards of trustworthiness, loyalty, and responsibility, and those who have committed serious crimes against their fellow citizens don't meet those standards."

Adam Fogel, Right to Vote Director at Fair Vote, a think tank voting rights and election reform organization,

vote

believes opinions such as Clegg's will remain an obstacle for communities and organizations when trying to influence politicians to repeal ex-felon disenfranchisement legislation.

"The greatest obstacle in changing disenfranchisement laws is getting politicians to change their ideas," Fogel said. "Many fear being labeled soft on crime and as non-supporters of law and order but this is a misconception. If they change these laws they are actually restoring someone's civil rights."

Due to the different legislation in each state, Fair Vote, the ACLU, and other organizations are pushing for a change in public policy. On Feb. 5, 2007, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) introduced the Ex-Offender Voting Rights Act of 2007 to the House of Representatives. The bill calls for the restoration of voting rights to those who have completed their sentence in full. It does not propose to extend voting rights to those who are currently incarcerated,

on parole or on probation at the time of a federal election. The bill has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary but no further action has been taken. Community activists believe without the bill's passage, those with felony convictions will continue to face an uphill struggle to regain their voting rights.

Maggie Williams, Project Director of the Voter Enfranchisement Project, an organization that uses community outreach to educate people about their voting rights, says the legislation surrounding disenfranchisement feeds powerful myths. Lack of education, she says, is one of the biggest deterrents for those convicted of felonies to regain their voting rights.

"It is important to make sure they know their rights accurately," Williams said. "Even though they are likely to encounter people who will give them the wrong information about whether they can vote or how to get their voting

rights back."

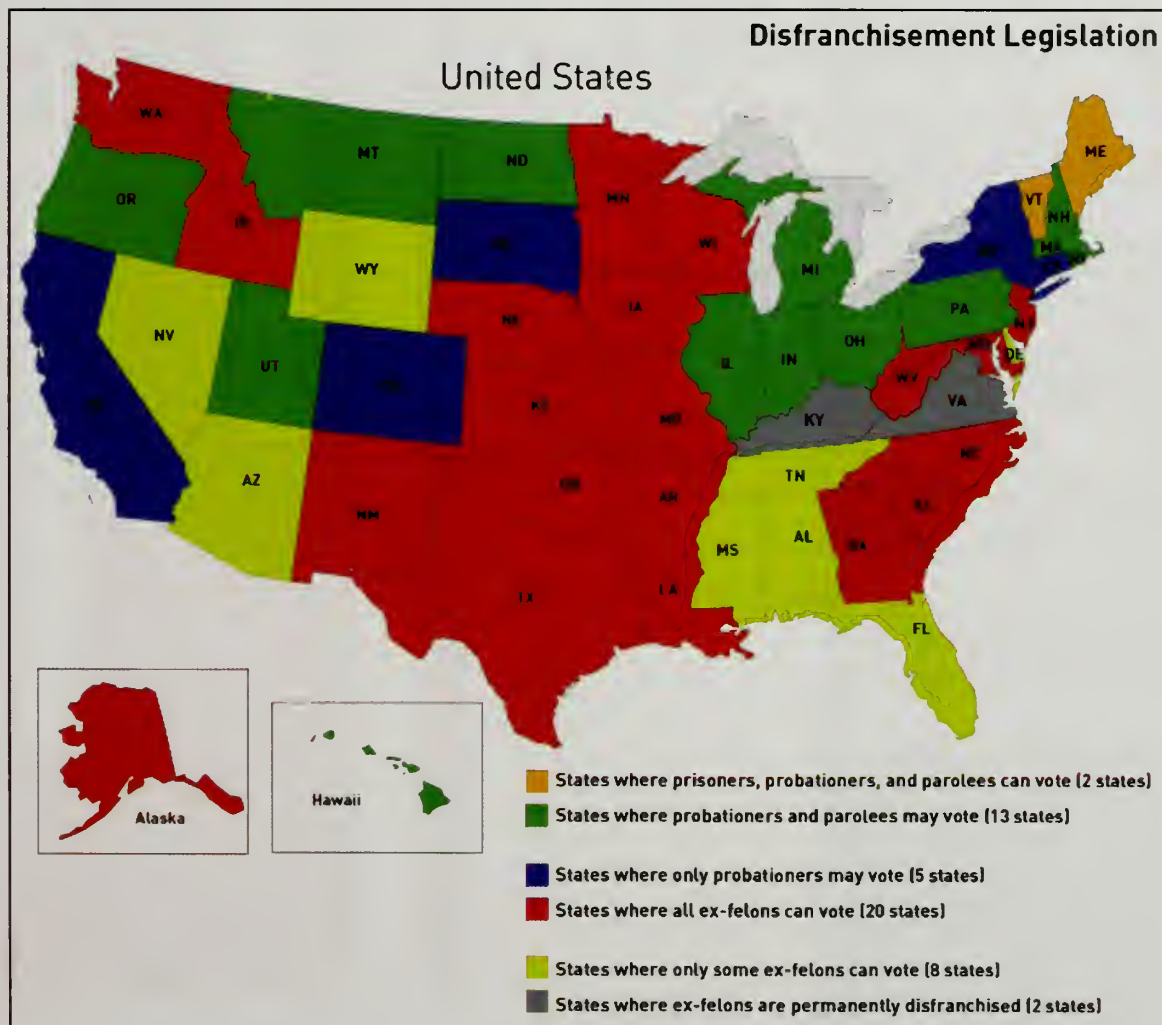
Williams believes the criminal justice system targets poor and low-income communities of color and the cycle of poverty and discrimination will be hard to break because a disproportionate number of Black and Latino people are disenfranchised and uneducated about their voting rights. This, she says, is having a great impact on future generations of voters, namely the children of those with felony convictions.


A report issued by the Sentencing Project titled, "Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity," shows the national incarceration rates of whites, blacks, and Hispanics as reported by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006. Per 100,000 people, the incarceration rate is 412 for whites; 2,290 for Blacks; and 742 for Hispanics. The higher level of black and Hispanic incarceration rates lead many to believe disenfranchisement laws perpetuate racism, even if done inadvertently.

Abramsky

believes his research shows disenfranchisement laws take away a person's access to politics and without access, people cannot vote for politicians who have the power to change the problems in their communities. The voices being lost, he says, are people of color who live in predominately poor, urban communities.

"With these laws, you lock into place a feeling of apathy in which people in a community say 'Voting has nothing to do with me,'" he said. "Without the access to politics, and by putting parents in jail for non-violent





drug offenses and taking away their children's stability, you are putting into place all the conditions to keep poverty going throughout the generations and creating the solidification of an under-class."

However those who support disenfranchisement laws disagree with the assertion the laws are racist.

Clegg writes in his article, "They have a disproportionate impact on some racial groups, because at any point in time there are always going to be some groups that commit more crimes than others, but that doesn't make the laws racist--just as the fact that more crimes are committed by men doesn't make criminal laws sexist. The people whose voting rights will be diluted the most, if criminals are allowed to vote, are the law-abiding people in high-crime areas who are themselves disproportionately black and Latino."

Thomas, however, believes by disenfranchising an individual, you disenfranchise an entire community. Voting, he says, is integral to rejoining society and unless people can elect politicians to represent them, disparities in jobs, housing and education will continue to exist.

"Being a person of color and having grown up in a time when people died for the right to vote is difficult for me because I can't exercise that right," Thomas said. "When you are talking about the populations most impacted by these laws, you find that a great many have lost the right to vote [due to felony convictions] and then you have a large percentage who are simply apathetic toward politics anyway. Right then, you have already disenfranchised a commu-

nity that badly needs the resources to create a safer environment."

But because the Supreme Court upholds the right for individual states to implement disenfranchisement laws, some believe the state governments have the responsibility to make sure those convicted of felonies can easily access the information necessary to gain their voting rights back.

"Getting people to vote, ensuring accuracy and fairness is the government's responsibility," Fogel said. "The goal of the criminal justice system is

"The people whose voting rights will be diluted the most, if criminals are allowed to vote, are the law-abiding people in high-crime areas who are themselves disproportionately black and Latino."

- Roger Clegg

to rehabilitate people who are paying or have paid their debt to society but the only way we can truly rehabilitate someone is if we allow them to re-enter society with all the privileges of being a citizen. And that includes the right to vote."

Racism or Justice?

We present the facts. You decide.

Jena 6

Michael Vick

Megan Williams

Genarlow Wilson

Onyx staff writer, Brittany Bass, asked our readers two questions regarding the Jena 6 and Michael Vick cases.

Racism or Justice?

Jena 6

By: Candice Springer

Lunch time at Jena High School in Louisiana perfectly displayed the racial tension between students. Black students would commonly eat on the bleachers, while the white students sat under what was known as the “white tree” in the center of the school courtyard. During an assembly on Aug. 31, 2006, a black freshman asked the school principal if black students could sit under the “white tree,” to which the principal said yes. The next morning three nooses were hung from the “white tree,” by three white students. Though the principal recommended these students be expelled, the superintendent reversed the decision and suspended the students instead. “Adolescents play pranks,” he said. “I don’t think it was a threat against anybody.” This event sparked a series of conflicts between Jena’s students, including several fights on and off school property. On Dec. 4, 2006, Justin Barker, one of the students allegedly responsible for the noose incident, reportedly taunted a black student, Robert Bailey Jr., for a fight at a party the night before. A group of black students, including Bailey, later assaulted Barker, sending him, unconscious, to the hospital. Barker was treated and released from

the hospital and made it to a school function later that night.

Over the next two days, the six students involved in beating Barker were arrested and charged with aggravated second-degree battery. By Dec. 7, the District Attorney upgraded the charges to attempted second degree murder and conspiracy to commit second degree murder. By June 2007, one student, Mychal Bell, was found guilty of these charges, facing a sentence of 22 ½ years in prison. The black community rallied around Bell and the other students, now called the “Jena 6,” claiming these charges were extreme and racist. “This is the most blatant example of disparity in the justice system that we’ve seen,” said Rev. Al Sharpton on *The Early Show*. “You can’t have two standards of justice.”

Currently, most of the charges against the Jena 6 have been overturned or reduced, but that has not quelled the friction in Jena and the debate of what punishment, if any, the 6 deserve. Some believe they deserve a harsh punishment, because they did commit a vicious crime. Yet, others see this as another case of racism in our justice system where black teens received excessive scrutiny while their white counterparts did not.

Reactions to Jena 6

1. Do you think Mychal Bell will receive a harsher sentence?
2. How is this situation significant to our country history?



Aly Sabatino
History and Geology
Class of 2010



Louvans Charlot
Graphic Design
Class of 2007



Sasha Weston
Speech Lang. Pathology & Audiology
Class of 2009

1. “Yes.”

2. “I thought we were past this. [It] definitely, adds a new perspective to America that I did not realize. A new chapter, a new bad chapter to American history that I thought was over.”

1. “No, because it is hard to say who should get punished. It’s high school!”

2. “Things just don’t change, racism still exists.”

1. “Yes, because if they’re going to try him as an adult and he was a minor that’s already being harsher than necessary. It was in retaliation so why aren’t both parties being tried?”

2. “It goes to prove that the justice system is not serving justice. It shows that there is a lot of corruption throughout American society.”

Racism or Justice?

Megan Williams

By: Makieya Kamara

On Sept. 9th, 2007 in Big Creek, W. Va, a young woman was found after being held captive for over a week. An anonymous tip aided the Logan County officers in finding her and, upon arrival to the house, she limped out toward them simply saying, "Help me."

The victim, 20-year-old Megan Williams, from Charleston, W. Va., was tortured mentally, physically, and sexually. She was raped, forced to eat rat and dog feces and lick her own blood from the bathroom floor. Williams was choked with a cable cord and stabbed in the leg. Her assailants made her drink from the

toilet, threw scalding water on her, and pulled out her hair; whatever remained was cut off. They repeatedly threatened her and told her how she would die: by putting a sack over her head and hanging her from a tree.

Williams' captors were six white people: Bobby Brewster (who she had a brief relationship with) and his mother Frankie Brewster, Danny Combs, Karen Burton and her daughter Alisha Burton, and George Messer; all ranging in age from 20 to 49. Between the six, one hundred and eight criminal charges have been filed against them since 1991.

Their current charges include sexual assault, kidnapping, and malicious wounding.

Originally, the FBI intended to pursue this case as a hate crime. However, they decided not to, claiming that state crimes carry harsher sentences; a state kidnapping charge can produce a sentence in prison of up to life.

Genarlow Wilson

By: Margaret Kamara

On New Year's Eve, 2004, Genarlow Wilson, a 17-year-old honor African American student and star athlete, and his friends hosted a hotel party that included sexual activities. The following day, a 17-year-old female who attended the party alleged she had been raped. Police promptly investigated the matter and found condoms, signs of drinking and a video camera with a tape in the rented hotel room. Portions of the tape showed Wilson having intercourse with the 17-year-old girl, who appeared intoxicated but did not ask Wilson to stop. Another portion of the tape showed a different female, a 15-year-old, performing oral sex on several boys in attendance, including Wilson.

Wilson, along with five friends, was arrested. He was charged with "aggravated child molestation for a voluntary act of oral sex with a 15-year-old." Though

the 15-year-old said the act was consensual, the state's legal age of consent is 16 and her statement was disregarded.

The charges resulted in a deal in which Wilson would have to serve an 11-year sentence that included 10 years in prison and one year on probation. Due to a stipulation requiring Wilson to register as a sex offender, Wilson rejected the plea agreement, as it meant he could not be in contact with his then eight-year old sister.

His friends, including one with the same charge, accepted plea bargains with the possibility of parole. But if Wilson and his friends had vaginal intercourse and not oral sex with the 15-year-old, they would have only been charged with a misdemeanor requiring a 12 month prison sentence with no sex offender registration.

On July 1, 2005, after questioning

and severe criticism of Georgia's judicial system, a new statute, the Romeo and Juliet Law, was passed. The law states that no teen involved in consensual oral sex would receive more than a 12 month sentence in prison or be required to register as a sex offender. The law, however, is retroactive. Wilson was finally released on Oct. 27, after the Georgia Supreme Court threw out his sentence, calling it "cruel and unusual punishment" under state and federal law. But the question many are asking— including former President Jimmy Carter— is if Wilson were white would he initially have received the same sentence?

Reports from CNN, ABC and www.wilsonappeal.com were used in formation of this piece.

Michael Vick

By: Ivelisse Sanchez

For most people, the name Michael Vick is no longer synonymous with the amazing plays he orchestrated as the quarterback for the Atlanta Falcons. Instead images of pit-bulls cross their minds. In April 2007, Vick's property in Smithfield, VA was searched by federal officials on suspicions of illegal dog fighting. During that search, dog training equipment and more than 50 pit-bulls were seized from the property. A second search in May led to the removal of several pit bull carcasses that showed signs of electrocution, drowning and hanging. The media frenzy that followed Vick's initial court appearance showed Vick's supporters arguing his right to a fair trial was compromised due to relentless coverage while members of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) called for his removal from the NFL.

Since the charges were initially filed, Vick has pled guilty

and is scheduled for sentencing on Dec. 10. He faces up to five years in prison, has been suspended without pay from the NFL, and has been dropped by all major sponsors including Nike. He has admitted his wrong doing and has publicly asked for forgiveness from the NFL, his family and his fans. New York Knick's basketball player, Stephon Marbury, who criticized ESPN's constant coverage of the case, later said, "I don't think he's [Vick's] right. He's 100 percent wrong. But this dude is trying to ask for forgiveness and everyone's turning their heads on a man trying to ask for forgiveness." PETA is now calling for the NFL to require all its players to attend PETA's "Developing Empathy for Animals" course and to take future cases of animal abuse seriously by updating its policy on personal conduct.

Reactions to Michael Vick

1. Do you think Michael Vick's celebrity status is a factor in this case?
2. Do you think race plays a role in this case?



Caitlin Kreitman
Health Science and Sociology
Class of 2010

1. "In a way I do because there are hundreds of people who dogfight and they don't make it on TV. But in the same regard I think it is something that should be made a big deal, it's not something you should do."
2. "I think the celebrity status plays a bigger role than race. I think if it were a white celebrity it would have ended the same way."



Jessica Berry Kennedy
Psychology and Legal Studies
Class of 2010

1. "No. I think just because he's a public figure everyone knows about it. But I think they would have reacted the same exact way if it was someone else in the community. The whole case is disturbing."
2. "No, I don't think so. Doesn't matter if he's black, white or purple, the stuff he did was absolutely ridiculous."



Karen Levi,
Information Science
Class of 2011

1. "It really does not matter if he's a celebrity or not."
2. "No, it is more about his celebrity status than race."



Tony Lott
Business
Class of 2010

1. "Yes. People get busted for things like that everyday and you never hear about it."
2. "I think it's more his celebrity status than race. If no one really knew him we wouldn't see him on ESPN and NBC. People want the law to crack down on him to make an example out of him."



Derek Johnston
Computer Science
Class of 2011

1. "I don't think justice will be served because he's a celebrity."
2. "No!"

Something to Take With You:

Experiencing Alan West-Duran

BY KRISA ALLEN

Many of us go through classes and once we've completed them, never give them a second thought. We move on, eager to get on with our college careers and eventually the working world. But, three years ago I entered Professor Alan West-Duran's class, Caribbean Culture and Literature, during my first semester at Northeastern. I gained much more than a couple of credits. I learned about a culture through its artists, painters, sculptors, musicians and writers. West-Duran's guidance through the West Indies not only expanded my knowledge of other islands, but also pushed the boundaries of what I knew of my own island, Trinidad. Furthermore, I made a real connection with him and, contrary to most classroom experiences, I am always eager to share what I learned from West-Duran.

Professor Alan West-Duran began his teaching career as a New York University teaching assistant while pursuing his graduate degree. After teaching at several universities, West-Duran settled here at Northeastern University. He has since been a valued Latin American and Caribbean Studies professor for eight years in the Department of Modern Languages. Being of Cuban and Puerto Rican heritage, West-Duran not only brings a real authenticity to his teaching but he also weaves infectious humor and passion into the classroom. His students cannot help but feed into his enthusiasm.

"I think Latin America and the Caribbean are amazing places and not just because I'm from there," he said. "I think the region's culture is deep

and rich, with so many different influences that as you begin to look at those roots it begins to open new worlds."

West-Duran believes his unique teaching style is renewed and inspired by his research, his students who motivate him to tackle new things, his wife Ester, his family and friends, and his thirst for knowledge.

Throughout his Northeastern teaching career, West-Duran has been honored by both students and the administration.

In April 2005, he received the Willie Rodriguez Distinguished Service Award from the Latin American Student Organization and was also awarded tenure that Spring. West-Duran has also been an advocate for a greater Latino/a presence on campus.

"There are about eight to ten Latino/a faculty at this moment, but I believe only about four or five have tenure. It's clearly not enough," he said.

West-Duran has supported various efforts to bring more diverse talent to NU as well as initiatives by other cultural institutions on campus. In addition, he is a member of the Committee on Community,



Alan West-Duran

Harmony and Reconciliation, which was assembled as a response to a racist incident involving Professor Leonard Brown last year.

It is clear that Professor Alan West-Duran is a gem in a sea of monotony.

"It's important to remember the concept of *aché*, which is the divine energy of the universe that makes good things happen," he said. "To have *aché* means having a conscience, listening to the ancestral spirits and the orishas, and being human, which entails defending others, fighting for justice, [and] being compassionate and generous. *Aché* to all!"

Speak. your piece

The only way that justice can be brought to Jena Six and other Black people in this country is if those in power look past the color of a person's skin.

This Speak Your Piece submission

was written in response to an editorial published in the September issue of the *Northeastern Patriot* in reference to the Jena Six situation. The editorial included racist remarks and gave me the impression that the writer, David Moberg, is very unaware of the social and political issues surrounding this incident.

When has it become professional and politically correct to address African Americans as “thugs?” When journalists do this, why do they wonder why they are labeled racists?

Moberg, as a reporter your duty is to report the facts surrounding the issue. Granted, this piece was placed under the “Opinions and Editorials” section, but the way you bashed those who are trying to change racist practices was unprofessional and distasteful. When reflecting upon the history and even the present condition of the United States’ political system is it obvious that African Americans are underrepresented in respected political and influential positions. Therefore, the concerns and issues that are faced by African American people on a regular basis are unheard and ignored.

In the case of Jena Six, any one can see that race has influenced the decisions and actions of those appointed to prosecute the case. When three white students hung nooses from a tree that

provided shade to white students, they were suspended. Yet when a fight broke out between a white student and black students, the black students were charged with attempted murder. Although it was six against one, the only weapons involved were Nike Air Force Ones. Therefore I cannot understand how one can justify “attempted murder.” And then for the victim’s parents to say their son was “violently attacked” when he suffered only a couple of cuts and bruises--which apparently were not serious enough to keep him from a party later that night--was ridiculous.

The Jena Six incident is a clear example that racism still exists regardless if we choose to believe it. Making false statements and suggestions that institutional racism is a thing of the past only demonstrates how knowledgeable one is, or better yet how misinformed they are. A person’s race has a great influence on the outcome of a situation.

We have seen media coverage on the Jena Six, but many media outlets failed to report these six young men’s bail was placed so high that their families could not afford to pay it. African Americans living in Jena, Louisiana have predominately low incomes. Thus placing the bails of these men in the 10,000-dollar range is a form of institutional racism that keeps low income African Americans behind bars.

Reverends Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson and all other “race-baiting felony apologists,” a term Moberg used to describe these men, are doing exactly what the federal and state governments are not doing: exposing injustice and addressing issues that are experienced by low income African Americans. The only way that justice can be brought to Jena Six and other Black people in this country is if those in power look past the color of a person’s skin. Until then, there will always be people fighting against racist practices.

Melanie Aranjó

THE FIRST AMERICANS REMAIN [REDACTED] CITIZENS SECOND CLASS

BY MARGARET KAMARA

When we think of November, the first thing that comes to mind for most people is Thanksgiving. The fourth Thursday of the month means it's time to eat turkey, stuffing, and homemade pies. Occasionally, you may hear something mentioned about Native Americans, who were part of the first Thanksgiving. But rarely will you hear anyone refer to November as American Indian Heritage Month.

In fact, just like other cultural heritage months, (Black History, Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic Heri-

nificance of American Indian Heritage Month has been a struggle from the beginning. In 1914, Red Fox James, a Blackfoot Indian, rode horse back from state to state collecting approval for a day to honor Native Americans. He presented the signatures of 24 state governments to the White House on Dec. 14, 1915. But, like many promises made between the government and the Natives, there is no record of such a day being proclaimed.

The first observance of American Indian heritage eventually took place in 1915 when Dr. Arthur C. Parker, a Seneca Indian, convinced the Boy Scouts of America to set aside a day for the "First Americans," which lasted for three years.

Also in 1915, the first formal appeal for an observance day was recognized when the president of the Congress of the American Indian Association, Rev. Sherman Coolidge, an Arapahoe, called upon the country to observe the second Saturday in May as American Indian Day. Later, several states celebrated the fourth Friday in September and Columbus Day as American Indian Day. New York was the first state to declare American Indian Day in May 1916.

Finally in 1990, former President George H.W. Bush approved a joint Senate resolution that officially designated the month of November as American Indian Heritage Month. Since then, other presidents including Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have made similar proclamations.

Still, American Indian Heritage Month goes mostly unrecognized.



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William Breitsprecher, founder of BreitLinks.com, an online resource tool that aims to provide a richer content in a variety of subject areas, believes the contributions of Native Americans cannot be measured in capitalistic ways.

"Some of the values that Native Americans have added to this country's collective spirit include [the] understanding that people can strive and grow in harmony with nature, and that people with different backgrounds, cultures, religions and traditions can build a nation," said Breitsprecher in an article titled, "Celebrating Native American and Alaskan Natives Heritage Month."

"Celebrating the rich history of Native Americans is important to understanding our natural heritage," he said. "It is just as important to acknowledge the injustices that have been imposed on American Indian people."

TEN LARGEST AMERICAN INDIAN TRIBES

Name	Population
Cherokee	729,533
Navajo	298,197
Latin American Indian	180,940
Choctaw	158,774
Sioux	153,360
Chippewa	149,669
Apache	96,833
Blackfeet	85,750
Iroquois	80,822
Pueblo	74,085

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

tage Month) November was federally designated as American Indian Heritage Month. Yet, American Indians and Alaska Natives continue to be forgotten in our history books and university calendars- including Northeastern's student planner.

Recognizing the need and sig-

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Kwanzaa 101

BY CHRIS CUMMINGS

Most of us have heard of Kwanzaa, but how many of us actually know what it is?

It turns out that approximately five million Americans not only know what Kwanzaa is, but also celebrate it in some capacity every year. For those of us who may be unfamiliar with Kwanzaa and its significance, here is some basic information so you too can join the celebration.

Kwanzaa was created in 1966 as a non-religious celebration of family and social values. Maulana Karenga, a Black studies professor at California State University in Long Beach, created the celebration of Kwanzaa. The word kwanzaa

one festival, but rather a combination of various African harvest festivals.

The festival lasts a total of seven days from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1. Each night, families celebrating Kwanzaa light a candle in the kinara, a decorative seven branched candle holder, and discuss one of the seven Kwanzaa principles. These seven principles are umoja (unity), kuji-chagulia (self-determination), ujima (collective responsibility), ujamaa (co-operative economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity) and imani (faith). On the night of Dec. 31, along with the lighting of the candle and the discussion of one principle, there is also an extravagant feast called the karamu where members of the community join together to celebrate the important things in life.

Every year the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute here at Northeastern celebrates Kwanzaa. This year's celebration is being held on Friday, Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. in the Amilcar Cabral Center. If you would like more information about this event, you can call the Institute at 617-373-2796.

is Swahili for "first fruits of the harvest" and while most African Americans can trace their roots back to western Africa, Karenga chose a Swahili word (an east African language) to emphasize the idea that African Americans originate from various places on the continent. The celebration itself does not represent any



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Out & About

Beatless

BY MAXINE ROCA

On Friday, Oct. 12, Haitian Student Unity (HSU), the Latin American Student Organization (LASO) and the Northeastern Black Student Association (NBSA) hosted the 3rd annual “Beatless” spoken word event. This year’s

emanated from both the crowd and the performers. Hosts, Luz Mederos and Roodley Dorleans, hyped up the crowd at the beginning of the show.

The featured artists, Oveous Maximus, Bassey and Bryonn Bain, provided refreshingly honest, humorous, and, at times, touching takes on their lives. The three performers exuded confidence and immediately caught

the flow with her humor and passion as she spoke of her struggles with being Nigerian and American. Finally, Bryonn Bain used his unique style of song-storytelling to talk about gentrification and his time in prison. Their honesty and vulnerability helped the audience connect with their stories.

Although the featured artists were incredible, the student performers

who came from all over Boston, made this event truly remarkable. Beatless helped showcase the students’ awareness of what is going on in society and what they can do to change and influence it. Student performers tackled a wide range of difficult topics including Hurricane Katrina, the Jena Six, feminism, death, the influence of media, war, religion, race,



Beatless, like those in the past, was a powerful event not to be missed. The Curry Student Center Ballroom was packed with people and the energy

everyone’s attention. Oveous Maximus quickly set the tone for a relaxed setting, encouraging the audience to respond while he was speaking. Bassey continued

identity, and youth violence. The student speakers commanded the stage and showed that they too could flow with the seasoned veterans.

STUDENTEVENTS

Awali: Welcome Celebration for Dr. Richard O'Bryant

BY CANDICE SPRINGER

On the cold and rainy day of Oct. 11, a warm crowd gathered together in the John D. O'Bryant African American Institute to welcome the Institute's new interim director, Dr. Richard



PHOTO BY CRAIG BAILEY

O'Bryant, the son of the same man whose name graces the building. His arrival at Northeastern marks the 40th anniversary of the AAI. The event, aptly titled "Awali: Welcome Celebration for Dr. Richard O' Bryant," was hosted by student group Brothers About Change (BAC) in collaboration with several Black and Latino student groups and organizations.

The evening opened with a greeting from BAC president Parnel Jospitre, who explained that the Swahili word "awali" means "new beginning," a fitting title for the celebration at hand. The event quickly transitioned into speeches from Northeastern President Joseph Aoun, Vice President for Student Affairs Ed Klotzbier and Samuel O' Bryant, Dr.

O'Bryant's uncle and one of the many members of his family in attendance. The speakers spoke of the legacy of John D. O'Bryant and the Institute and wished Dr. O'Bryant well as he leads the institute into the future.

BAC treasurer, Jordan Clark, who served as the master of ceremonies called upon the leaders of numerous student groups to welcome Dr. O'Bryant and explain their groups' significance to the Institute.

The Awali celebration also featured music and dance before Dr. O'Bryant addressed the crowd, thanking them for the warm welcome. He discussed his intent to continue the Institute's growth into the 21st century. He promised to be a dedicated staff member who will help prevent minority students from falling through the cracks and reiterated to his guests that all of Northeastern's minority community could create change together.

The night ended with dinner and friendly association by all on what was an evening filled with enjoyment and hope that this year will be the Institute's best ever.

"The initial purpose [of the event] was to have the community come together and bring back the feeling of love, community, family, and unity to the Institute," said Jospitre. "And I think we accomplished that with the Awali celebration."

The RoundTable

The Round Table is an open, uncensored discussion on hot topics.

Playing the Race Card

Join Onyx Round Table editor Christine Williams and our Round Table participants: Northeastern University's Makieya Kamara, Tiffany Malcolm, and Shannon Slocum as they discuss their opinions on and experiences with playing the race card.

Christine: The topic for today is the race card – when is it okay to play, when is it necessary to play, and how often do you encounter the situations in which you use it?

Shannon: I don't have a specific experience [that I can think of], but I do feel weird playing the race card. I try to get around it because it always comes off as an "excuse" to people who don't understand, even though people within our race can usually see what's happening. I know I didn't like Michael Vick with his dogs and what-not talking about "oh that's a part of the black community" —

“Even the Jena Six situation – people think that we’re just ‘playing the race card’”

Tiffany: —Inappropriate use of the race card!

Shannon (laughing): ...trying to justify his actions with the race card.

Christine: That's not necessarily a "black" thing so much as maybe a Southern thing.

Shannon: Exactly, so to put that on my race – to say "Well my people do this" ...well, if your people do that, it's still wrong!

(Group Laughter)

Shannon: I'm just being honest!

Makieya: I think there are times when it's okay to play the race card but, well, when you say "playing the race card", it comes across with [negative connotations].

Shannon: ...To some degree, any time you use race [as a reason for something] it's going to come across as "playing the race card" ...as an excuse – even if it's the real reason. Even the Jena Six situation – people think that we're just "playing the race card," like that situation's not really about race.

Tiffany: When clearrrrrly [it is].

Shannon: Right. But it comes across that way to lots of people apparently. It's always something you have to think

“[playing the race card] always comes off as an “excuse” to people who don’t understand, even though people within our race can usually see what’s happening.”

about before you say anything.

Tiffany: So can other races use the race card? Or other

“When people think of race, they mainly think of Black and White. They kind of forget about everybody else.”



Shannon Slocum

communities?

Makieya: I mean, I guess.

Tiffany: Cuz I feel the majority of race—of playing the race card, is mainly a black issue.

Christine: I think that's because there's this sentiment among some people (regarding Black people and our history) that we just need to “get over it.” As if (being sarcastic): “You know, just because those kids in Louisiana are getting treated harshly doesn't mean it's because they're black. You guys are always putting things on race. It's not that hard being black. Just get over it.” There's no empathy because it's a situation they can't understand.

Makieya: Yea. I think other races could play the race card, but it maybe wouldn't get as much attention. Like if something happened and someone Asian played the race card and then say, Shannon played the race card—

Shannon: —It would be like “Oh there she go or there they go again.”

Makieya: Yep. Because when people think of race, they mainly think of

Black and White. They kind of forget about everybody else.

Christine: Well that's like, my best friend is Indian, and she'll get mad at me if we watch a movie and I'm like “Ugh, how come there's no Black people in this movie!” She'll be like, “How come there's no Indian people in this movie!”

Tiffany: That's true! I was thinking about that the other day. I do things like that—say “Aw, no black representation in this” or “No black people in that”, and then one day I looked around and I was like wait a second, at least I'm here --there's no Asians no...nothing!

Shannon: And they don't seem to complain about it as much as we do when they don't see themselves represented.

Tiffany: ...We learned in one of my classes that Asians are seen as the “model minority”....meaning, they are people of color, but they're seen as—
Makieya: --less threatening?

Tiffany (laughing): picking themselves up by their own bootstraps, and being successful on their own and not relying on the American government to help them out.

Makieya: Versus Black people who have been here forever, and we're still struggling and what-not, playing the race card, and blaming things on conspiracy [to keep us down].

Shannon: There's a man at my job... who I think is a historian, and he's always taking about race...[how] there was slavery in other countries, segregation, and poverty...like “Why does it seem that black people are the only people who can't get it together.” He makes me kind of angry.

Tiffany: What bothers me most when people say just get over it or something like that is I will get over it when the

government gets over it.

Makieya: Exactly.

Tiffany: And when I see implementation of [equal] educations in our classrooms and see less [Black men] incarcerated. Why can't Black people get it together? Because there are policies...that won't let us get it together.

Makieya: People will say “Why are Black people still complaining? Ya'll have been saying the same things for years.”

Shannon: Everybody keeps saying “Get over it” like it happened 6 million years ago. My mother was alive to hear Martin Luther King speak. It wasn't that long ago.

Makieya: It really wasn't.

Shannon: They really expected us to get over [it] tomorrow.

Makieya: And they'll say “Slavery happened so long ago” but yea, when were we allowed to vote. People were getting hosed like you [Shannon] said not so long ago.

Shannon: Give it some time please.

Makieya: It's not just the slavery. It's also the after effect and the fact that slavery hasn't ended – it's just institutionalized... Nothing's really changed. They may have changed their methods; they may have gone covert with their racism but they've still got chains and shackles on us. Look at these loans!

(Group Laughter)

Makieya: If that ain't slavery I don't know what is!

Tiffany: Yea, it's true.

Christine: And you know, going back to the race card, I think it's mostly perceived as a “black issue” because race is stressed so much with regard to the Black community. Even little things like terms like “acting black” –

like Makieya said earlier, it draws more attention to race in certain issues.

Shannon: Even in social settings. You can tell when certain people are uncomfortable because they'll start saying things like "Oh you know I can't do that – I'm really White."

Tiffany: Or that person who sees you start to dance and goes "Oh you know I can only snap..."

Christine: Playing on stereotypes.

Makieya: Well my favorites are the people who say "I have black friends..."

Tiffany: That's the worst.

Makieya: Did ya'll see that group of kids [on Facebook] who covered themselves in mud and imitated the Jena Six? ... One of the white kids [not covered in mud] they chased him and kicked him and said n----- and some other stuff like that.

Shannon: Oh wow.

Makieya: Yea and [the girl who posted it] her response was like "Oh I absolutely adore black people. I have five good friends who are Black..."

Tiffany: (joking) You saw them in my video!

(Group Laughter)

Makieya: That's playing the race card--that right there.

Christine: Reverse use of the race card.

Tiffany: Haha. Yea, I'd say that counts as pulling out the race card.

Shannon: But they really don't feel like

Shannon: Like to say something by accident...

Makieya: Oh, I've had people try to touch my hair! Reaching for my head like "Ooh I've never touched an afro!"...Or [say things] like "Oh my gosh! It's like wool. It's like a sheep."

Shannon: Oh wowww. Somebody might get cut.

Makieya: And they don't see anything wrong with it! They don't see the naivety of it and that's where the race card comes in. Cuz you know if I say "Oh I'm uncomfortable with that." it becomes like "Oh you're playing the race card....that's not offensive." Or "I didn't mean it like that. You need to chill out."

Tiffany: Uh-uh.

Makieya: No, you don't say that to me. I don't give a damn if my hair feels like wool! You don't say that!

(Group Laughter)

Makieya: And my hair does not feel like wool – I just put Pink Lotion® up in this bad boy!

Tiffany: (to Shannon) Weren't we just talking about this...those old seasons of Top Model when they got on YaYa for dressing up in the kente cloth? And they were saying "Ooh she's too Afrocentric"...Do you remember that?

Shannon: They felt like she was "overdoing it"...but you know what? There was an Indian girl on the show

be maybe she loves her people or she loves her culture and she's expressing that. No, instead it's he or she is militant or [this person] is "too black" or "they're pushing their blackness on us."

Christine: And what you're saying about being "too Afrocentric" for comfort is really well related to the race card. Take hair for example. I just told my mother I'm thinking about not processing my hair anymore.

Makieya: No tell them what you told me.

Christine: (laughing) What did I say? Oh yea, "I might get off the creamy crack."

(Group Laughter)

Christine: But seriously, take for instance the woman who has an afro or the man with dreads. If their employer was to ask them to change their hair to be "more professional", would it be right to justify their hairstyle with the race card? [People] will say things like "Oh you don't wanna go into the working world trying to look like Angela Davis..."

Tiffany: You know, I remember having a conversation like that with someone and I was saying how un-relaxed hair is looked at and seen as unprofessional and he'd asked me "Well why is that?" And I'd never really thought about it. I thought more into it after that day. But it's funny how it seems natural for me

“...take for instance the woman who has an afro or the man with dreads. If their employer was to ask them to change their hair to be “more professional”, would it right to justify their hairstyle with the race card?”

they're being racist. And I've wondered - do I do that to other races...saying things by accident without really thinking about it?

Tiffany: I've wondered that too and personally I don't know.

and she was very into her culture and they said anything about it.

Tiffany: They thought it was beautiful and exotic.

Makieya: But then when we do it, it's seen as threatening... Why can't it just

to get my hair relaxed...like there is no other choice.

Makieya: When actually it's unnatural to get it permed.

Christine: And that's what I was saying about hair in terms of the race card

earlier. That same employer – if they asked you to “do” something with your hair, implying that you straighten it...I would be offended because I feel like this is my natural hair. You can accuse me of playing the race card all you want but this is the hair I was born with.

Shannon: They’ve done documentaries like that.

Makieya: I’ve known people who’ve gotten hired with a weave in their hair, but then somewhere along the line take it out and have natural hair and their boss kinda gives them that “oh.” Like “Oh...

you wear your hair all... out like that?”



Makieya Kamara

Shannon: There was an episode of Living Single like that -- Carlton (the one with the dreads) at some job. I was thinking about that with him because his dreads were long and generally even with White people or other people with long hair is seen as unprofessional. Is that different? That’s not really so much racial.

Makieya: But you know what, to tell someone with natural hair you would prefer them not to style their hair naturally...essentially you’re saying, “Well at least keep your natural hair looking more like ours. Cut those

dreads, cut that fro.” That’s telling them you want them to change their texture to make you feel more comfortable.

They would never say that to a girl with a perm- I mean a real perm- with really curly hair. It shouldn’t go one way.

Shannon: But look at the media. You’ll never see a black anchorwoman on TV without long permed hair. Or even look at Beyonce.

Makieya: You always see the ambiguous girls with the curly hair – that mixed look. It perpetuates this thought that nappy hair is some rare thing that just “can’t” be right or natural and just goes away if you “do your hair.” Employers [who aren’t Black] look at the media and forget our hair for the most part does not come out looking like that perm commercial.

Tiffany: Look at us, we’re talking like relaxed vs. natural hair and then the race card, we’ve got like two roundtables.

(Group Laughter)

Tiffany: You know it’s all intertwined though. All our issues are complicated.

Christine: A lot of them are psychological too.

Makieya and Shannon: Yeaaaaa.

Shannon: I remember one of my friends, her mother had said something in the car to us once. Some black boy had said something to her daughter who was like 6 or 7, and [the mother] got all upset and was like “You know what? If people would just stop talking about race and slavery and all that stuff, these kids wouldn’t even know this stuff existed...if people would just stop talking about it.” And I was like is she serious?

Tiffany: Isn’t that the way the world works right now? Our history is not in history books – nobody wants to talk about it now!

Makieya: You should have asked her do you think people deserve to know about the Holocaust?

Shannon: Ooh.

Tiffany: Have you gone to the museum? Perfect example: the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Maryland is in the hood, run down...It’s a nice museum [in terms of] information and all...but then you have the big, huge Holocaust museum in DC!

Christine: Well do you think to say to someone “Look at the difference between the museums.” they would say “Oh you’re playing the race card. You could move your museum to a better neighborhood if you cared more about it.”?

Makieya: (playing devil’s advocate) Yea, if your community would put more money into it. If your community cared more about your culture

Tiffany: Maybe when my community isn’t half incarcerated--

Makieya: Well you know if they would just get jobs and stop acting like criminals maybe they wouldn’t be in there... I’m just playing devil’s advocate, but seriously, when you have policemen coming up looking for a “black man between the height of 4’9 and 6’3, weighing 95 to 500lbs”, what do you expect? That’s everybody!

Tiffany: Exactly! I’m not saying we’re almost always innocent—I’m saying if our justice system is supposed to be fair and equal, why is it not?

Makieya: That’s the same thing with the Jena Six!

Shannon: Do you think that’s part of the problem why they think we’re always playing the race card? That we don’t outwardly say yes, we have faults too?

Makieya: I think so. ‘Cuz I’m sorry but when you have people like Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson coming out claiming that they’re holier-than-thou... people look at it...and they look at Mychal Bell (one of the Jena Six)...and they say “Oh, he had a record, look at him he’s not perfect.” And it’s like we’re



Tiffany Malcom

not saying they were perfect.

Tiffany: And we're not asking that they not be reprimanded...just not unfairly.

Makieya: Especially when the white kids were punished "secretly?" I mean really.

Tiffany: Yea, I agree. I feel like part of the problem is we don't admit our faults all the time, but 1. Everybody has faults, [just because we don't say them] that doesn't mean we think we're all innocent. And 2. Sometimes you cannot deal at the table admitting your faults, because [people will] just dwell on the faults and forget anything else good...

Christine: Look at the media—shows

about black people like I Love New York exploiting our faults.

Shannon: That ghetto = black thing. It drives me crazy.

Christine: But you know what, the people who they base that stereotype off of—those are the people who will sit around and complain and then go play a race card for no reason, just because they want to.

Makieya: Exaaaactly. And they play the race card for stupid things! If you walk in someplace actin' mad ignorant, causing a ruckus—

Tiffany: And then someone calls them on it in a respectful way and there's still like "It's cuz I'm bl-aaack."

Makieya: Meanwhile they're actin' a mess...that's where the negative [aspects] of playing the race card come from. From people remembering the times those people said something.

➔ Interested in joining a Round Table discussion? You too can be part of the experience. Send an email to Round Table editor Christine Williams at christinefromtheonyx@yahoo.com to volunteer!



Ms. Nubian

Holla at ya girl.

Send me an e-mail at msnubianonyx@yahoo.com

Stay or go?

Hey "Ms Nubian,"

I have a question you can answer. Okay so I've been dating this guy on and off for a couple years. It's been an emotional relationship, basically a roller coaster. Is it wrong to continue the relationship if I have no confidence in its future?

Thanks,
Anonymous

Ms. Anonymous,

I think at this point in your life you should be planning for the future. If there are certain aspects in your life that you don't see or want to be a part of your future, now is the time to eliminate them. However, if you truly love this guy, you have to ask yourself if you are willing to live without him. If not, do you think the two of you could be just friends? Also, what is the reason for this on again/off again pattern in your relationship? If he is doing something to constantly hurt you or vice versa-then it is time to smarten up and let it go. You will find love again. True love shouldn't hurt so much or be so hard. Love and happiness should go hand in hand; you should not have to sacrifice one for the other.

Ya Girl,
Ms. Nubian

Growing pains

Dear Ms. Nubian,

I'm having a huge problem. Ever since my best friend and I returned from summer vacation for our sophomore year, things have been weird. I mean, she acts SO different, to the point where I often find myself being annoyed or irritated when we hang out. It seems like, whatever she went through this summer, it changed her and it's hard for me to accept this and embrace the change, when I'm so familiar with how things used to be. Anyway, I don't want us to stop being friends (although sometimes I think I'm better off) but I don't know how to tell her that she's annoying the crap out of me! Please help!

Thanks,
Majorly Irritated

Majorly Irritated,

It seems like you and your friend have either outgrown each other or you aren't as close as you seem to think. I say this because it sounds like you think her behavior this year is immature. So maybe you have grown over the summer and she has not changed at all. On the other hand, I would think that if something did happen with her this summer, as her close friend you would have known about it and therefore would be able to understand her present actions. Also, as a true friend you should want

to make sure that everything is ok with her and that her actions are not a cry for help. As a true friend, I think you need to get it together and find out what's going on in your friends' life, rather than asking me if you should abandon her. Maybe she is the one who would be better off!

~Ms. Nubian

SOULspeech

Submit to SoulSpeech
onyxeditor@yahoo.com

Black is Beauty

Blacks everyday in America struggle to live
Few succeed in finding their primary motives
While others accept failure while
trying to prove that they have something to give

Our shortcomings and failures yield no
excuse for us to play the race card
Brothers and sisters the face that our skin is charred
And our social misposition leaves us twice as likely to be scarred
Only means that the lord put us on this earth to work twice as hard
But instead we stay barred, blinded by ignorance and lack of motivation
Most too worried about the act of procreation
Instead of self-love and lifes innovation
Its too often forsaken, that we are all gods precious creation
So don't get it mistaken

We keep shooting off at the mouth
until there's no more bullets left in our lungs
then deem it necessary to shoot out with our guns
at our brothers and sons, people what have we done
Why can't we understand that we are all one?

But this isn't a new ideal that we're fighting for
Our people have been fighting since times of the civil war
So when will we walk through that door, on our path to freedom
Malcolm X warned us of lifes poison but not many believed him
Martin Luther King Junior had a dream, but not many stepped up to succeed him
Yes we're living and breathing

But our status is equivalent to the stage of life where we go through teething
We're just babies in this world trying to maintain our ground, but look around
You have to work hard for success, in do time you can rest
But right now you must strive for success

Our ancestors worked hard to get us this far
So look at the top and work twice as hard to get where they are
They call you black to represent the color of the struggle of your people
But just remember that in God's eyes we're all equal
So as they consistently try to put your people beneath you
Put them back in check because our skin color is brown not see thru
So lets start a movement to progress our culture and people
Look out for your own or society will eat you
Look to tomorrow at a new era
And only then can we improve "Black America"

By Marques Crosby

The Argument

With every sunrise we come closer to the demise of my people,
We say we want change and they say they are doing it and we ask ourselves what is
really going on,
I guess they should consider us all in love,
But our partner is that of this misconstrued world and the structure it bestows
upon us,
I guess they should consider us all mummies,
For what is visible are only the lies that are engraved on the cloth that we are en-
gulfed in,
I guess they should consider us a third world country,
For we are a "developing nation" that lacks the skills needed to manage and allo-
cate our resources properly,
Stand up people and take your place,
Refuse to be in love and demand to be in control,
There shall be no more domestic violence for it destroys our children who destroy
their progeny,
Rebuke the notion of being raveled up and call to be unwrapped,
But be not surprised to finally breathe in deceit dishonesty and greed,
For it is no enigma that the plagues of capitalism are consecrated on the three,

soul, speech

Rise up and lift those entrepreneurial spirits,
For when our minds are going creatively,
Our world, insatiably, will move up from third tier to a dominating force
I chronically detest the methodology of this structure placed upon me,
This is not the study of zoology for our palms read that we are and always will be
out of a cage,
Let us engage in all that we could be, derange all that we cant be and front page all
that we will be,
Limitless our limits, fly higher than what it means to fly high,
Embrace our insecurities and they will secure the ins and outs of our fears
Infiltrate the youth with knowledge of the past,
Pass down to them a rightful guide for the present,
Present them with a plan of action for the future,
Testing the faithful will only prove that your faithless,
Hence to be in faith is to be divine, glorified and to be above all else,
Invigorate your mind with the ins of wisdom and the outs produced will be in
abundance,
This equations equates to the equator shifting,
Minds uplifting, futures of difference and
A people transitioning, from blind to seeing,
Becoming to being; inadequate to
Fully capable of doing and being anything great

By Serrano Legrand

november 2007

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1 AKA-Network
to Success; Nov
2nd Sex & Blow
Pops
BESS-Gen
Meeting;
Resume

2 LSCC-Cocinar
Con Gusto 12p
AAI
LASO-Carlos
Gomez 6p W Ad.
NBSA-Diaspora
Dinner 6p AAI

3 BAC-Brothers
From Another
Mother
Conference 10a
AAI
AKA-Community
Service

4 AKA-Church
and Brunch

5 AKA-Study
Break

6

7 AKA-Book
Discussion AAI
Conference
Room

8 NBSA-Voter
Registration 5p
AAI Classrooms
116&118

9 BESS-NSBE
Region 1 Fall
Regional
Conference

10 NASO-
King & Queen
Pageant 6:45p
CSC Ballroom

11 Church
Service 8a
Morning Start
Baptist;
Founder's
Week Begins

12 NO
classes

13 LSCC-Toy
Drive Begins
LSCC

14 LSCC-Latin
Through
Jewish Eyes 5p
CSC Ballroom
CVSA- Antonio
Monteiro AAI

15 LSCC-
Thanksgiving
Potluck 6p AAI

16

17 Founder's
Week Ends

18

19 Xcel-
Annual "How
to Work It"

20

21 No Classes-
Thanksgiving
Break Begins
AKA-Book
Discussion AAI
Conference
Room

22 Thanksgiving

23

24

25

26 Various
Groups-
HIV/AIDS
Awareness
Week

27 **NBSA**/BESS-
1,001 Black
Inventions
6:30p CSC
Ballroom

28 HSU-Sickle
Cell
Awareness
Week Begins;
Bake Sale

29 HSU-Bake
Sale
BESS-General
Meeting, Yoga

30 CVSA-Fashion
Show W. Addition
HSU-Sickle Cell
Info Forum
+Dinner AAI



deceember 2007

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 HSU-Fashion Show BESS-Step in the Moonlight Formal
2	3	4	5 Fall Classes End CVSA-Ice Cream Social CSC AKA-Book Discussion AAI Conference Room	6	7 Final Exams Begin NBSA-AAI Kwanzaa Celebration 5p AAI	8
9	10	11	12	13	14 Final Exams End	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Christmas	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28	29
30	31					

